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MEMORANDUM FOR:

Colonel White

29 June 1954

SUBJECT

: Review of Attached Position Standards

1. I have carefully read the attached position standards material, and I believe that the four series published therein represent a workman-like job. Because of my past associations, I am most readily familiar with the one covering Employee Relations Officer and Employee Relations Assistant, which seem quite adequately described, based upon my acquaintance with that function.

2. I cannot avoid mentioning my own feeling that position standards material is most easily adaptable to those positions requiring the performance of tasks, as opposed to those requiring the formulation or implementation of policy. In this connection then, within the limits of my experience, I can find no fault with the series dealing with Tabulating Machine Operation and Tabulation Project Planner.

3. However, I cannot escape the feeling, in reading the Courier Series, that a considerable amount of helium has been injected into the Position Evaluation Chart, when you consider the relatively uncomplicated basic function of a courier; i.e., the ability to lift something, read the instructions regarding to whom it goes, carry it there and put it down. I wonder about the eternal verity of such descriptive phrases as: "[such] contacts require the exercise of much tact and discretion in meeting people," (at the GS-3 level), or: "[the mental demands of the GS-4 courier position require] the exercise of considerable mental alertness and mature judgment." At the same level, I wonder about the wisdom of saying that an absolute requirement is: "a comprehensive knowledge of security regulations and practices." Also, I cannot feel confident that the GS-4 courier has "much opportunity to exercise individual initiative and discretion in performing assigned duties and responsibilities."

4. To be effective in personnel planning and administration, I am sure you will agree that absolute honesty in the establishment of qualifications standards is essential, lest the entire operation degenerate into a calcification process, whereby initial entry into a vocational field is barred through rigid application of standards tinged with unreality, and where promotion may be inequitably geared to the same mechanism. With the exceptions in the Courier Series specifically noted above, I believe the material under examination is presented in compact, essentially readable and understandable fashion.

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